



LOAD-DATE: April 2, 2002

Page 539

85 of 111 DOCUMENTS

Copyright 2002 Video Monitoring Services of America, L.P.

Video Monitoring Services of America

SHOW: America At War

March 29, 2002, Friday 9:00

AM ET

NETWORK: MSNBC Cable Programming

MEDIUM: Cable

LENGTH: 117 words

BODY:

START: 30.10

Breaking News. Recap from above.

Visual - Supermarket Bombing, Jerusalem.

Visual - Israeli Troops, Ramallah.

Sound Bites - Ariel Sharon, Israeli PM, says we are going to do what is necessary.

Sound Bites - On the Phone, Yassar Arafat, Palestinian Authority, says he would rather be martyred.

Sound Bites - On the Phone, **Hasan Abdel Rahman**, Chief PLO Representative to the US, says since the arrival of Cheney to the region two Palestinians have been killed. He says Sharon knows that Arafat isn't responsible for what happens. He says Sharon is starting a war.

Visual - Arafat.

Visual - Sharon.

Visual - Suicide Bombings.

Visual - Ramallah Compound.

END: 38.51

SEGMENT-ID: 23

PROGRAM-ID: msnbc0900.0329.23

LOAD-DATE: May 2, 2002

SHOW: Q&A WITH JIM CLANCY 03:30 PM Eastern Standard Time

March 28, 2002 Thursday

Transcript # 032801cb.k18

SECTION: NEWS; INTERNATIONAL

LENGTH: 3333 words

HEADLINE: Will Saudi Peace Plan Work?

GUESTS: Adib Farha, Alon Pinkas, **Hasan Abdel Rahman**

BYLINE: Colleen McEdwards, Rula Amin

HIGHLIGHT:

Can the peace plan created by Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah work?

BODY:

THIS IS A RUSH TRANSCRIPT. THIS COPY MAY NOT BE IN ITS FINAL FORM AND MAY BE UPDATED.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

YASSER ARAFAT, PLO LEADER: I would like to reiterate our readiness toward an immediate cease-fire.

COLLEEN MCEDEWARDS, CNN ANCHOR (voice-over): The Palestinian leader says he is ready to work for a cease fire. It follows an agreement reached at the Arab League Summit in Beirut, where there was hope for reconciliation and a new path to peace in the Middle East.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: There is absolutely no comparison between today and

yesterday. We're quite far from what took place yesterday.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: This is a historically significant strategic decision that came from the Arab countries from the Arab summit, and it's the first time since 1948 where the Arab leaders have come unanimously, willing, saying we will recognize Israel, we will normalize relations.

Page 541

Q&A WITH JIM CLANCY 03:30 PM Eastern Standard Time March 28, 2002 Th

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We hope that the Arab world is reaching a strategic crossroad, maybe for the first time, with the Saudi initiative, really willing to sit down and negotiate peace.

MCEDWARDS: But the summit's achievements are now in the shadow of an act of terror after a bomb ripped through a seaside hotel in Israel.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The Palestinians will continue their struggle against Israel until they reach their goals.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: WE will have to decide what the right response will be, because it is the obligation of the Israeli government to protect its people.

MCEDWARDS: On this edition of Q&A, the Saudi peace plan: can it work?
(END VIDEO CLIP)

Hello and welcome to Q&A. I'm Colleen McEdwards. Jim Clancy is off.

Just minutes ago, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat announced that he was ready to work for a cease fire under the Tenet plan that was proposed last year by the United States CIA director, George Tenet.

All of this follows the unanimous adoption by the Arab League of the first Arab peace initiative for the Middle East.

The plan says it offers Israel security and normal relations, in exchange for withdrawal by Israel from the Palestinian territories.

Well, CNN's Rula Amin has been covering the summit and is with us now from Beirut where, Rula, I imagine there has been some reaction there already to this statement by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

RULA AMIN, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Well, actually, we have not heard any reaction to that statement except from the Palestinians themselves, who say this is the only way out.

Yasser Arafat is making his position very clear. He wants a cease fire, but it's a two way track. Israel has to do what it needs to do, according to the Tenet plan.

However, we have been hearing from other Arab leaders throughout this summit in the last few days who have been emphasizing this. They say there is an urgent need to stop the violence, to put an end to the violence, but they also say that Israel has to stop attacking Palestinian towns. They say Israel has to stop its siege of Palestinian towns. And the main message is that there is no way that there will be peace along with occupation.

Bashar al-Assad, the president of Syria, was very clear. He said occupation is one of the utmost forms, maximum forms of terrorism. And this is something we've been hearing a lot from the Arab leaders here who say that they don't want to see civilians hurt, they want to spare civilian lives, but on both sides.

Whenever we ask them about the suicide attacks in Israel, they always point
Page 542

Q&A WITH JIM CLANCY 03:30 PM Eastern Standard Time March 28, 2002 Th
to the other side. They say, you know, on the other side, there are people who are killed too, Palestinians.

They also say that as long as there is occupation, you will always find some kind of reaction. And occupation is an extreme form of terrorism that will produce such actions.

These are the kinds of statements we have been hearing here in the summit --

Colleen.

MCEDWARDS: But are you getting a sense, I mean, is there support among the Palestinians for a cease fire at this point?

AMIN: Well, you know, here in the Arab summit, the Arab leaders we have been hearing from, yes, they do want to see a cease fire very much.

Today they offered a peace plan, offering Israel peace and normal relations between Israel and the Arab states. In return they say Israel must withdraw from all land occupied in 1967 and its occupation, and have a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

This is the message that they are sending to the Israeli people, they say, not only to the Israeli government. There is a lot of skepticism here about the Israeli prime minister, Ariel Sharon. Many people here don't believe that he really wants to have peace with the Palestinians or the Arabs.

But they believe that their message should reach the Israeli people, that there is a chance to have peaceful relations, to live normally in this region.

But there is a price, and that is to end occupation -- Colleen.

MCEDWARDS: Have they spelled out what they mean by normal relations with Israel? What exactly are they talking about in this proposal?

AMIN: Well, you know, the clearest answer for that that we have heard came from the Saudi foreign minister, Saud al-Faisal.

Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia was the one who proposed this initiative to the Arab leaders. He was the one who envisioned it. And Saud al-Faisal today in an interview with Christiane Amanpour, he did say - - she said, what is normal relations, and he said, just like the normal relations we have with the United States. Which means peaceful relations, embassies, trade, friendship, visits, tourism. That's the way Saud al-Faisal spelled it out to us.

MCEDWARDS: All right, Rula Amin, thanks very much. Appreciate it. Now, before we get you some more analysis of events at the summit, here's what the Lebanese prime minister had to say about the Middle East peace initiative. He spoke with CNN just a short time ago.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

RAFIK HARIRI, LEBANESE PRIME MINISTER: Using force to solve the problem between the Palestinians and the Israelis, it will not lead to anywhere. It

Page 543

Q&A WITH JIM CLANCY 03:30 PM Eastern Standard Time March 28, 2002 Th will lead to more destruction and more pain, to more killing on both sides.

We know very well that the one who is paying, the one who started this, but nevertheless, we are looking forward. We want to put all that era behind us and look toward the future.

I'm sure that the Israelis and Arabs can live together if the Israelis decide clearly and strongly that they want to make peace with the Arabs and they want to live in peace with their neighbors.

Otherwise, unfortunately, things will continue as it is.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MCEDWARDS: And here is how the initiative was received in the United States.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

RICHARD BOUCHER, U.S. STATE DEPT. SPOKESMAN: When's the last time the Arab League stood up and supported a proposal by someone like the crown prince of Saudi Arabia about making peace in the region including Israel? That's what different. That's what's new.

Is it good to have that difference out there? Is it good to have that as the stated goal of the Arab League and the Arab states, in moving down a road to negotiation? Absolutely.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MCEDWARDS: And now someone who has been following developments at the Arab League Summit. We've got Adib Farha, a professor at the Lebanese American University, and he is with us from Beirut.

Mr. Farha, thanks for being here.

I'm going to get to the details of this Saudi plan in just a moment, but first I want to ask you about this statement by Yasser Arafat, that he's ready to work towards peace based on the Tenet plan.

Do you have a sense from where you sit how important this is?

ADIB FARHA, LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY: It is certainly very important to have peace and to have the state of siege that Palestinian townships have been under for quite a while now.

You can't expect President Arafat to be able to be persuasive and ask his people to stop the intifada without peace. He has to have a good argument, and he cannot force them to just sudden quit and lay down their arms when they continue to be under siege and when Israel continues its atrocities against them.

They live in a state of humiliation, and I think they're fed up. There has to be a good reason, a good motivation, a good incentive.

Page 544

Q&A WITH JIM CLANCY 03:30 PM Eastern Standard Time March 28, 2002 Th

MCEDWARDS: Sure, but he's saying this has to be based on the Tenet plan, without any alterations to the plan that Israel has expressed some reservations about.

FARHA: Well, it's not unlike Israel to agree to a plan and renege. They agreed to the Tenet plan. There is no reason why they should renege now. The Arabs have demonstrated, as recently as this afternoon, that peace is a strategic options for them, that we are fully committed to peace, and now it is up to the other side to reciprocate.

MCEDWARDS: You know, Mr. Farha, Israel has just said the very same thing about the Palestinians, that it's usual for them to declare a cease fire, to declare cooperation, and then to go back on it. What has to happen here, do you think?

FARHA: It is not the Palestinians that are occupying Israeli territory. It is the other way around.

MCEDWARDS: All right. And just a quick question to you about the Saudi peace proposal. How important a message do you think it is that the Arab nations have come out in support of this.

FARHA: I think it's a very loud, clear, unequivocal message that we want peace. The Arab masses are convinced that it is Israel that doesn't want peace, and we would certainly like Israel to surprise us. They have shown every indication, particularly P.M. Ariel Sharon, that he doesn't want peace. He talks about peace, and he practices war. He talks about a cease fire, and he continues to occupy the Palestinian townships. And he puts them under siege. And his forces continue to occupy Palestinian territories. His forces continue to bombard Palestinian police headquarter and the Palestinian Authorities headquarters.

How can he expect President Arafat to be able to stop his people or to go out and roundup -- quote, unquote -- "terrorists" when his police force is itself under siege?

MCEDWARDS: All right, Mr. Farha, I'm going to stop you there.

We're going to get more on the Palestinian point of view later in the program. Thanks a lot for your time, though, appreciate it.

And coming up, Israeli and Palestinian reaction to the initiative from the

Arab League and all the developments in the last several minutes or so.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KOFI ANNAN, U.N. SECT. GEN.: I believe profoundly that it is the right of both Israelis and Palestinians to live in peace and security. I have just spoken to both P.M. Sharon and Chairman Arafat. I urged the leadership of both peoples to stay the course and continue the quest for peace. They say the first step is an immediate cease fire.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

Page 545

Q&A WITH JIM CLANCY 03:30 PM Eastern Standard Time March 28, 2002 Th
(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MCEDWARDS: Welcome back to our discussion about the Arab League initiative aimed at peace in the Middle East, and also comments just a few moments ago by Yasser Arafat, that he's ready to work towards a cease fire under the terms of the Tenet plan.

With reactions to this, we are joined from New York by Alon Pinkas, the counsel general of Israel to the United States, and **Hasan Abdel Rahman**, the Palestinian representative to the United States. And he is with us from Washington.

Mr. Pinkas, to you first for your reaction to the statement by Yasser Arafat.

Alon Pinkas, U.S. COUNSEL GENERAL OF ISRAEL: Excuses me for not being very much impressed with that statement.

Unfortunately, it takes Mr. Arafat 18 months to reach the conclusion that he needs a cease fire.

If you look at what happened and what transpired in the Middle East over the last three days, you will see that there was a terror attack literally an hour ago that may still be going on right now in which three Israelis have been murdered.

There was the terror attack last night in Netanya in which 21 were murdered.

There was an ambulance that was stopped at an army checkpoint in which we found two bands of explosives traps. There have been two United Nations members murdered by a Palestinian policeman in the West Bank.

So excuse me, looking back at history from 1967, 1937 rather, onwards, for really not being impressed with Mr. Arafat's declarations.

MCEDWARDS: All right. Mister...

PINKAS: And I'm sorry, I'm sorry -- let me just add one more sentence. Mr. Arafat has lied so many times to so many people on so many issues, and in so many variations, that I am very skeptical when it comes to believing a word he says.

MCEDWARDS: Mr. Rahman, why should Israel take this seriously when the terror attacks continue?

HASAN ABDEL RAHMAN, PALESTINIAN REP. TO THE UNITED STATES: First of all, let me say the following.

For the last 35 years, the Palestinian people have been living under an illegal military occupation, which has moved 300,000 of its Taliban Jews into the West Bank and Gaza.

In the last 17 months alone, 1,200 people were killed, 400 of them are children under the age of 16, 8 percent of them are women. 8,000 homes have been destroyed. The infrastructure of the Palestinian Authority has been destroyed by Israel.

Page 546

Q&A WITH JIM CLANCY 03:30 PM Eastern Standard Time March 28, 2002 Th

And today, as you and I are speaking here today, there are 40,000 Israeli soldiers in the West Bank and Gaza, 500 tanks. There are thousands of

Palestinians in Israeli jails.

This, in our view, is a habitual act of terror, sponsored by the state of Israel against the Palestinians.

How can anyone expect the Palestinians not to try to defend themselves in the face of this onslaught by the major military power in the Middle East?

If the Israelis move out of our territories and leave us alone, to live in peace, then I assure you that they will have peace.

MCEDWARDS: Let me give Mr. Pinkas a chance to respond to that. Mr. Pinkas, does the presence of Israeli troops in the Palestinian controlled areas create this sort of problem?

PINKAS: Colleen, I'm sorry you're missing the story.

These misleading conceptions by Mr. Rahman, these lies that he perpetuates every day, kind of distort the story.

This is not about occupation. This is about a Palestinian leadership that is completely bankrupt, leading a nation of homicidal maniacs for the last 60 or 70 years.

This is a so-called national liberation movement that doesn't pride itself in its poets and philosophers, but on its suicide bombers.

Now, as for the issue of occupation, first of all, it's not an illegal occupation, because before 1967, (a) there was Arab aggression against Israel, (b) there was no Palestinian state, (3) there was no legal sovereign in the West Bank and Gaza. So the term illegal goes to demonstrate the ignorance that Mr. Abdel Rahman usually demonstrates.

Now, as for Israelis presence in those territories, which I have to tell you I don't like and 60 percent of Israelis don't like -- we sought to change that in the year 2000 in a peace process right here in the United States. It was called Camp David. Under the auspices of then President Bill Clinton, then Prime Minister Barak put forth a very elaborate plan, a peace proposal, a definitive and conclusive peace proposal.

The Palestinians flatly rejected it because they cannot accept it because they are incapable, unwilling to come to terms with reality.

This is a leadership that is not just morally and ideologically bankrupt.

This is a leadership that absolutely prides itself on nothing but inflicting tragedy and misery on its own people.

MCEDWARDS: Gentlemen, I'm going to ask you for a time out with me here a little bit. I want to steer us in a different direction.

I think everybody appreciates the arguments on both sides of this, but I don't want us to get too bogged down in some of the rhetoric that we do here,

Page 547

Q&A WITH JIM CLANCY 03:30 PM Eastern Standard Time March 28, 2002 Th
frankly, over and over again.

I really want to hear you both on where to go from here, and let's talk about that Saudi peace proposal and how realistic, how important it is, and whether or not the fact that the Arab League has endorsed it really makes a difference here.

Mr. Rahman, to you first.

RAHMAN: Let me say before...

MCEDWARDS: Mr. Rahman, please, I want you to take the question.

RAHMAN: Allow me -- he called me ignorant. And I think you should not allow this kind of impoliteness to be on your show. You should have stopped Mr. Pinkas when he called ignorant.

MCEDWARDS: Mr. Rahman, I've asked you both to tone down the rhetoric a bit and let's try to talk about where to go.

RAHMAN: Excuse me. Excuse me. Excuse me. There is a statement by the

secretary general of the United Nations last week, before the Security Council, in which he said that Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories is illegal.

There is 180 states around the world who consider Israelis occupation of the Palestinian territories under international law illegal.

When Mr. Pinkas speaks about the bankruptcy of the Palestinian leadership, he does not look at the criminality of the Israeli leadership throughout the last 52 years, when they uprooted the Palestinian people from their country, from their homeland, destroyed 482 villages and towns in order to establish an exclusive Jewish state.

This is the biggest crime that has been committed in modern history against any other people.

MCEDWARDS: Mr. Rahman, thank you. I'm going to give you one more chance to ask (sic) my question, please. The Saudi peace proposal.

RAHMAN: Yes. We have accepted the Saudi peace proposal.

We believe that it is a courageous stand by the Arab countries. It puts the ball in the Israeli court. If Israel is serious about reaching an equitable peace with the Palestinians and with the Arabs, this is the formula that is consistent with international legality, with 242, 338, resolutions of the United Nations, and with the position of the international community.

MCEDWARDS: All right.

RAHMAN: But if the Israelis want to look for loopholes here and there, they can always find an escape to having to face this challenge that was put to them today by all the Arab countries combined.

Page 548

Q&A WITH JIM CLANCY 03:30 PM Eastern Standard Time March 28, 2002 Th

MCEDWARDS: Mr. Pinkas, can Israel afford to turn its back on this?

PINKAS: No, we're not turning our back on it, and we're not dismissing it, and we're not taking it lightly, and...

MCEDWARDS: But you haven't accepted it, though.

PINKAS: Wait -- because we need to study, seriously, the details.

Look, when you're talking about an Arab plan, don't forget what Arab world you're talking about.

You're not talking about Hamilton, Jefferson, and Madison. You're talking about the world of Qadhafi and Saddam Hussein and (UNINTELLIGIBLE). So excuse me of being somewhat skeptical and leery of these plans.

Having said that, Colleen, I think it's a positive step forward from which perhaps a good thing could emerge, and I think we await to see the dynamics in the Arab world on whether or not this is a serious plan or this is just a PR stunt that works or may not work.

The fact that -- you look at the speech made by the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad, the fact that he accepted the plan is irreconcilable with the speech that he had made.

On the issue of the Palestinian acceptance of the plan, of course the Palestinians accept the plan. What other opportunity, what other possibility do they have to mingle with these people?

If the Saudi Arabians ever gave a damn about the Palestinians, you would not have refugee camps in Lebanon, in Syria, in Jordan or in the Gaza strip.

MCEDWARDS: I've got to stop you. Alon Pinkas, **Hasan Abdel Rahman** -- thank you both. Really appreciate it.

And that's all the time we have for Q&A this day. I'm Colleen McEdwards.

The news continues, right here on CNN.

TO ORDER VIDEOTAPES AND TRANSCRIPTS OF CNN INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMMING, PLEASE